Crimp Vs. Solder

Category: Projects
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What’s best, crimping or soldering. Should you use crimping? How is a good crimp done.

Below are references that address these questions.

Wikipedia Entry

Crimping vs Soldering Advantages and Disadvantages

Good and Bad RF Crimp Connections

ARRL Instructions for Crimping RF Connectors

How to Make a Quality Crimp

More on Making a Quality Crimp (technical)

Molex Crimping Manual (technical)

TE Systems Crimp Chart

Notes on crimping:

It is always best to have the right tools. Make sure you use the right connector for the cable and the right crimp die for the connector. With the right tools, RF connectors can be crimped very quickly and are very reliable. One nice advantage, is that it is easy to reuse the connector. The center pin is generally soldered (which is easy to unsolder) and the shield is crimped with a short metal “tube”. Some companies sell bags of replacement “tubes” so the connectors can be reused. Follow the connector’s instructions EXACTLY and you’ll have a solid connection that will last forever.

If you are making outdoor connections, I recommend using N connectors as they are hermetically sealed. (PL-259s are not) For power connections, I recommend using the same connectors that are used to connect solar panels together. They're much cheaper than Anderson Power Poles and they form a hermetic seal. For signal connectors, go to your hardware store and look in the irrigation section. They have special twist-on connectors that are meant to be underground or sit in the rain. They're pretty cheap if you buy a big bag.

Check back again in about a week and I'll have more links and references.